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TURGENEV'S HEROINES: A FUNCTIONAL ANALYSIS

by



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A THESIS

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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA  
FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled "Turgenev's Heroines: A Functional Analysis" submitted by Helena Debevc-Moroz in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis is two-fold: to analyze the attributes and the function of Turgenev's heroines and to explore the reasons Turgenev painted his heroines so predictably. In the first part of this thesis, a functional analysis is made of the heroines' attributes and function. Despite the divergence in the social scene in Turgenev's novels and short stories, his heroines are similar in many ways. Their background, their aspirations, and their determination are the characteristics of the heroines of all of his works, from the first to the last. This study initially examines the role which the heroine plays in the novels vis à vis the hero. The heroine expects the hero to lead her out of her oppressive environment and her style of life into a brighter future. At the crucial point of the novel or of the short story the man fails to fulfill her expectations and parting follows. The heroine thus emerges superior to the hero. In spite of this, it is always the man, and not the woman, who participates in the rapid changes in the social scene - a subject of the majority of Turgenev's novels.

The second part of the thesis is an examination of Turgenev's own ambivalent stand toward women; it shows the importance that the author attached to the mysterious and the inexplicable in life in general and in human relationships in particular.



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>Chapter</u>	<u>Page</u>
I. INTRODUCTION .....	1
II. ATTRIBUTES OF THE HEROINES .....	6
III. FUNCTION OF THE HEROINES .....	24
IV. TURGENEV'S ATTITUDE TOWARD HIS HEROINES ...	35
V. CONCLUSION .....	56
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	62



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## A NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION

With the exception of the well-known names, which are spelled in accordance with the Oxford Dictionary the rest of the Russian names, titles of stories, and expressions in this thesis are given in the transliteration system outlined in A Guide for the Writing of the M.A. and Ph.D. Theses published by the Department of Slavic Languages, University of Alberta.



A LIST OF THE ORIGINAL  
RUSSIAN TITLES OF TURGENEV'S NOVELS AND  
SHORT STORIES GIVEN IN ENGLISH IN THIS THESIS

<u>Russian</u>	<u>English</u>
Rudin	Rudin
Dvorianskoie gnezdo	A Nest of Gentlefolk
Nakanune	On the Eve
Dym	Smoke
Nov'	Virgin Soil
Perepiska	Correspondence
Faust	Faust
Pervaia liubov'	First Love
Asya	Asya
Parasha	Parasha



# LIST OF PROTAGONISTS' NAMES

<u>Work</u>	<u>Heroine</u>	<u>Main Hero</u>
Rudin	Natal'ia	Rudin
A Nest of Gentlefolk	Liza	Lavretskii
On the Eve	Elena	Insarov
Smoke	Irina	Litvinov
Virgin Soil	Marianna	Nezhdanov Solomin
Correspondence	Mar'ia Aleksandrovna	
Faust	Vera	Pavel Aleksandrovich B.
Asya	Asya	N.N.
Parasha	Parasha	Viktor Alekseich
Fathers and Sons	-	Bazarov



## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The present study is concerned with the analysis of the heroines of I.S. Turgenev. In many research studies on Turgenev, for example Zelinskii's Sobranie kriticheskikh materialov dlia izuchenia proizvedenii I.S. Turgeneva, Pokrovskii's Ivan Sergeevich Turgenev: Ego zhizn' i sochineniia, Gershenzon's Mechta i mysl' Turgeneva, Chernyshev's Lishnie liudi i zhenskie tipy, we find some reference to Turgenev's heroines. Most of these works, however, are concerned with a physical description of the heroines, rather than an interpretation of their characteristics and behavior in the context of Turgenev's own attitude toward women. Moreover, the portrayals consist largely of paraphrasing Turgenev's own description of his heroines. In the opinion of the present writer, such an approach while useful in itself, is of little value for the purpose of an adequate analysis of Turgenev's heroines and of the determination of the reasons for their particular attitudes and behavior. In fact, rather than reading a paraphrased version of Turgenev's heroines, it would, of course, be preferable to read Turgenev's original description. This is especially evident in Chernyshev's study. He lists there the heroines and then describes





each one individually. Here is an example:

Мы начинаем с Наташи из "Рудина". Если бы мы в действительности встретились с Тургеневской Наташей, то, — по уверению самого автора, — она с первого взгляда могла бы нам даже не понравиться. Хотя и с правильными, даже красивыми чертами лица, Наташа была худа, не вполне еще физически развита, смугла, держалась несколько сутуловато, говорила мало, производила впечатление холодной девушки-ребенка. Но, по мере того, как мы присматривались бы к ее лицу, оно все более и более привлекало бы нас к себе, — и прежде всего своими большими, темными, выразительными глазами, сверху обрамленными тонкими, как бы надломленными по середине бровями, над которыми возвышался чистый, ровный лоб.<sup>1</sup>

In comparison, Turgenev's own description of Natal'ia read as follows:

Дочь Дарьи Михайловны, Наталья Алексеевна, с первого взгляда могла не понравиться. Она еще не успела развиться, была худа, смугла, держалась немного сутуловато. Но черты ее лица были красивы и правильны, хотя слишком велики для семнадцатилетней девушки. Особенно хорош был ее чистый и ровный лоб над тонкими, как бы надломленными по середине бровями. Она говорила мало, слушала и глядела внимательно, почти пристально, — точно она себе во всем хотела дать отчет.<sup>2</sup>

The two authors, in the two works quoted above, had, of course, two different aims in portraying the heroine. Turgenev's portrayal is a work of art, which is developed throughout the whole work. Chernyshev, on the other hand,

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<sup>1</sup> K. Chernyshev, Lishnie liudi i zhenskie tipy v romanakh i povestiakh I.S. Turgeneva (S.-Peterburg: Tip. I. Gol'dberga, 1896), pp.235-236.

<sup>2</sup> I.S. Turgenev, "Rudin," Polnoe sobranie sochinenii i pisem v dvadtsati vos'mi tomakh (Moscow: Izd-vo Akademii Nauk, 1963, v. 6., p.276.



does not analyze the heroine in detail, since his purpose is to give a concise picture of Turgenev's heroine in order to familiarize the reader with her essential traits.

In contrast to the above mentioned works, in the present study an attempt will be made to describe Turgenev's heroines using a functional-analytic approach, and to determine the factors which prompted Turgenev to create his distinctive female characters.

The method used in the present analysis is a modified version of an approach which was developed in the now classic study of The Morphology of the Folktale by Vladimir Propp. In his work Propp set out to compare the themes of fairy tales. He separated the component parts of the fairy tales and then made "a comparison of tales according to their components."<sup>3</sup> The result was a morphology "i.e. a description of the tale according to its component parts and the relationship of the components to each other and to the whole."<sup>4</sup> He noted that constants and variables appeared in the tales. For instance, while the proper names of the characters changed, their actions or functions did not. He inferred from this that it was possible to study the tale "according to the function of its dramatis personae."<sup>5</sup> He

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<sup>3</sup>Vladimir Propp, Morphology of the Folktale (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1968), p.19.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p.19.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p.20.



described function as "an act of character, defined from the point of view of its significance for the course of action."<sup>6</sup> Thus, Propp himself foresaw the possibility of analyzing the characters of the fairy tales by the same functional approach that he employed in comparing their themes. In the foreword to his work, he states that the original study also contained "an investigation into the rich sphere of *dramatis personae* (i.e., characters as such)," although that part was not included in the published version of the book.<sup>7</sup>

Following Propp's general approach, the present study will attempt to deal not only with the function of the heroine but with her attributes as well. To assess her attributes adequately and to present as complete a picture as possible, the constant and the variable elements will be discussed in the following areas: milieu, educational background, character traits, aspirations, relationships vis à vis parents, relationships vis à vis hero, etc.

After the analysis of the heroine's attributes - (Chapter 1) - and the analysis of her function (Chapter 2), the present study will consider Turgenev's ambivalent attitude toward women, happiness, and love, which might have motivated him to create a particular type of heroine. The present analysis will try to show what Turgenev

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<sup>6</sup> Propp, Morphology of the Folktale, p.21.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p.xxvi





heroines are like, what motivates them, why they are so motivated and what, in turn, motivated Turgenev to create this type of female character.

The investigation of Turgenev's heroine was based in the main on Turgenev's novels - Rudin, On the Eve, A Nest of Gentlefolk, and Virgin Soil. To illustrate various points in the analysis more clearly, examples were drawn from his novel Smoke, his short stories "Faust," "Asya" and his earliest work of importance, the narrative poem "Parasha"; and to a lesser extent from the short story "Correspondence."





## CHAPTER II

### ATTRIBUTES OF THE HEROINES

The proposed analysis will begin by investigating the common traits of Turgenev's heroines. According to Richard Freeborn, Turgenev's novels "...appear to be constructed of the same elements, the same literary properties, which are suitably rearranged and reassembled to suit the changed requirements of each novel but which are never noticeably altered."<sup>1</sup> The milieu of Turgenev's heroine in the majority of cases, is a "nobleman's nest" where she lives in seclusion with her family. Liza, in A Nest of Gentlefolk, lives in the provincial town O..., Natal'ia in Rudin, is found on her mother's estate in the country, Elena in On the Eve is at her parents' cottage in the country, Marianna in Virgin Soil lives at her uncle's country estate, Vera in "Faust", Asya, in the short story of the same title, Mar'ia Aleksandrovna in "Correspondence" as well as Parasha in the poem of the same title and many others live or have lived their whole life in the country. While the young men study in the cities and travel abroad

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<sup>1</sup>Richard Freeborn, Turgenev: The Novelist's Novelist: A Study (London: Oxford University Press, 1960), p.47. (Hereinafter referred to as Turgenev: The Novelist's Novelist.)



to further their education, the young women live in isolation, on their families' estates in the summer and in towns or cities in winter. I. I. Ivanov notes, that if one is to become interested in Turgenev's heroine, who appears so prosaic superficially, one must "inspect her spiritual life" and "by means of careful and loving observation discover in her the divine spark of great moral forces capable of flaring up into a glowing flame."<sup>2</sup> He goes on to say that

...beauty, elegance and faultless grace are part of a particular kind of woman, either cold coquettes like Odintsova, or trivial and hypocritical representatives of marital duty like Sipiagina. The girls endowed by the author with the noblest instincts and with a sincere courageous heart are intended to make a different impression on us. Turgenev introduces these real heroines almost always with the same reservation: they do not shine with external beauty, you might not even like them at first, they are far from being always graceful and feminine - in the sense that an author who is a ladies' man might describe them.<sup>3</sup>

If we examine the physical characteristics of the heroines we find a similar depiction. Here are some phrases describing the heroine:

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<sup>2</sup>V. Pokrovskii, Ivan Sergeevich Turgenev: Ego zhizn' i sochineniia: Sbornik kritiko-literaturnykh statei (Moscow: Sklad v knizhnom magazine V. Spiridonova, 1908), p.286. (Hereinafter referred to as I.S. Turgenev: Ego zhizn' i sochineniia.) Wherever the translation as here is mine, it will always be indicated in the footnote.

<sup>3</sup>ibid., p.285. Translation here is mine.



...Никто красоткой  
Ее б не назвал, правда... (Параша, т.І, с.76)<sup>4</sup>

...Наталья Алексеевна, с первого взгляда  
могла не понравиться. Она еще не успела  
развиться, была худа, смугла, держалась  
немножко сутуловато. (Наталья, т.6, с.276)

...линии чистые, строгие прямые... (Елена, т.8, с.10)

...чистый, несколько строгий профиль...  
(Лиза, т.7, с.208)

...невольная, несколько неловкая грация...  
(Лиза, т.7, с.243)

...грациозно сложена, но как будто не вполне  
развита... (Ася, т.7, с.75)

Во всем ее существе, в выражении лица,  
внимательном и немного пугливом, в ясном,  
но изменчивом взоре, в улыбке, ...было что-то  
нервическое, электрическое, ...что не могло  
всем нравиться, что даже отталкивало иных.  
(Елена, т.8, с.32)

В сравнении с теткой Марианна могла казаться  
почти "дурнушкой". Лицо она имела круглое,  
нос большой, орлиный, серые, тоже большие  
и очень светлые глаза, тонкие брови, тонкие  
губы. Она стригла свои русые густые волосы и  
смотрела букой. (Марианна, т.І2, с.43)

There is only one beautiful heroine, Irina in Smoke, whose  
beauty was one of the features setting her apart from  
other heroines. The morally strong, the innocent, the  
virtuous girl who is Turgenev's heroine almost par excellence  
is at best physically striking, not beautiful. What gives  
her an interesting expression are her inner qualities, the

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<sup>4</sup> I.S. Turgenev, Polnoe sobranie sochinenii i pisem v  
dvadtsati vosmikh tomakh (Moscow: Izd-vo Akademii Nauk,  
1960-1968). References hereinafter to this edition of  
Turgenev's works will be given in the text by citing  
the volume and page number. For reference, see List of  
Protagonists' Names to be found before the Table of Contents.





qualities of the soul rather than of the mind and it is love that finally makes her glow.

The educational background of the heroines does not provide them with the possibility of developing into intellectually interesting women. Their education is meager and inadequate if one is to compare it with the education of the men of the same period. Their mothers tried to take over their early education only to abandon it and leave their daughters in the hands of nannies, governesses or sending them to boarding schools for noble women. Here are some examples:

...но Наталья должна была каждое утро читать исторические книги, путешествия и другие назидательные сочинения... Выбирала их Дарья Михайловна, будто бы придерживаясь особой, своей системы. На самом деле она просто передавала Наталье все, что ей прислал француз-книгопродавец из Петербурга, исключая, разумеется, романов Дюма-Фиса и комп. (Наталья, т.6, с.280)

Все у ней [Ельцовой] делалось по системе, и дочь свою она воспитала по системе, но не стесняла ее свободы. (Вера, т.7, с.16)

[Анна Василевна] занялась было воспитанием дочери, и тут ослабела и передала ее на руки гувернантке... (Елена, т.8, с.19)

Гувернантка, которой Анна Василевна поручила закончить воспитание своей дочери, – воспитание, заметим в скобках, даже не начатое скучавшей барыней, – была из русских... Гувернантка эта очень любила литературу...она приохотила Елену к чтению... (Елена, т.8, с.33)





Марья Дмитриевна, в сущности, не много больше мужа занималась Лизой, хотя и хвасталась перед Лаврецким, что одна воспитала детей своих; она одевала ее, как куколку, при гостях гладила ее по головке и называла в глаза умницей и душкой - и только: ленивую барыню утомляла всякая забота. (Лиза, т.7, с.239)

На Лизу она имела мало влияния; тем сильнее было влияние на нее ее няни, Агафьи Власьевны. (Лиза, т.7, с.240)

But at the same time, most

...of the author's efforts were spent on the heroine. He tried to delineate her personality with the greatest distinctness. On every occasion she is first and foremost everywhere. We know her life story from almost the cradle; we see what nature endowed her with, what developed from the first impressions of her childhood...<sup>5</sup>

Pushkin's description of Tat'iana in Evgenii Onegin would be a very appropriate way to describe the Turgenevan heroine's life in her environment:

Она в семье своей родной  
Казалась девочкой чужой.<sup>6</sup>

There are numerous examples of the heroine's loneliness and isolation in Turgenev's works. For example:

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<sup>5</sup>V.A. Zelinskii, Sobranie kriticheskikh materialov dlia izucheniia proizvedenii I.S. Turgeneva (Moscow: Tip. T. Malinskago, 1884), p.253. (Hereinafter referred to as Sobranie kriticheskikh materialov.) Translation here is mine.

<sup>6</sup>A.S. Pushkin, "Evgenii Onegin", Sobranie sochinenii (Moscow: Gos. izdat. khudozhestvennoi literatury, 1960), v. 4, p.47.



Она часто оставалась неподвижной,  
опускала руки и задумывалась...  
(Наталья, т.6, с.279)

Подруг у ней не было: изо всех девиц,  
посещающих дом Стаховых, она не сошлась ни  
с одной...

. . . . .  
она зажила собственною своею жизнью, но  
жизнию одинокою. Ее душа и разгоралась и  
погасала одиноко, она билась как птица в  
клетке, а клетки не было: никто не стеснял  
ее, никто ее не удерживал, а она рвалась и  
томилась. (Елена, т.8, с.34)

Читала она не много; у ней не было "своих  
слов", но были свои мысли, и шла она своей  
дорогой. (Лиза, т.7, с.243)

Дяди она чуждалась, как и всех других  
людей, она именно чуждалась их, а не боялась;  
нрав у нее был не робкий.  
(Марианна, т.12, с.43)

Ирина пользовалась почти неограниченною  
свободою в родительском доме; ее не баловали,  
даже немного чуждались ее, но и не прекословили  
ей: она только того и хотела...  
(Ирина, т.9, с.181)

...тоска взволнованой души сказывалась в  
самом ее наружном спокойствии, и родные  
ее часто были вправе пожимать плечами,  
удивляться и не понимать ее "странностей".  
(Елена, т.8, с.35)

Only when it comes to the heroine's choice of her man  
do the parents (Stakhovs in On the Eve), the mothers  
(Mar'ia Dmitrievna in A Nest of Gentlefolk, Dar'ia  
Mikhailovna in Rudin), and the guardians (Sipiagins in  
Virgin Soil) feel that their wishes and expectations as  
to a "suitable match" are to be respected. When the  
heroines disobey and follow their own feeling in the matter



the parents' reaction is definitely not genteel.

— Замужем! За этим оборвышем, черногорцем!  
Дочь столбового дворянина Николая  
Стахова вышла за бродягу, за разночинца! Без  
родительского благословения! И ты думаешь,  
что я это так оставляю? Что я не буду жаловаться?  
что я позволю тебе...что ты...что...

. . . . .  
Что скажут теперь все знакомые, весь свет!  
И ты бесстыдная притворщица, могла после  
этого поступка жить под родительской  
кровлей! (Елена, т.8, с.139)

— За что ты меня убила? За что ты меня  
убила? — так начала свои жалобы огорченная  
вдова. — Кого тебе еще нужно? Чем он [Паншин]  
тебе не муж? Камер-юнкер! не интересан!  
Он в Петербурге на любой фрейлине мог бы  
жениться. А я-то, я-то надеялась!

. . . . .  
Ах, я этого не перенесу!  
. . . . .  
Ты убьешь меня, если не одумаешься, слышишь? —  
И, назвав ее раза два неблагодарною, Марья  
Дмитриевна услала Лизу.  
(Лиза, т.7, с.252)

Услышав от Пандалевского об ее свидании  
с Рудиным, она не столько рассердилась,  
сколько удивилась тому, как могла благоразумная  
Наталя решиться на такой поступок. Но  
когда она ее призвала к себе и принялась  
бранить ее — вовсе не так, как бы следовало  
ожидать от европейской женщины, а довольно  
крикливо и неизящно, — твердые ответы  
Натали, решимость ее взоров и движений  
смуглили, даже испугали Дарью Михайловну.  
(Наталя, т.6, с.340)

— Да, Марианна Викентьевна! Я говорю о г-не  
Калломейцеве — об этом образованном, отличном  
молодом человеке, который, наверное, составит  
счастье своей жены и от которого может  
отказаться одна только сумасшедшая!  
— Что делать, *ma tante*! Видно, я такая!  
(Марианна, т.12, с.195)

— Итак, ты любишь господина Нежданова?  
— Да.





- И намерена продолжать...свои свидания с ним?

- Да; намерена.

- Ну...а если я тебе это запрещу?

- Я вас не слушаюсь.

Валентина Михайловна подпрыгнула на кресле.

- А! Вы не слушаетесь! Вот как!... И это мне говорит благодетельствованная мною девушка, которую я призрела у себя в доме, это мне говорит...говорит мне...

- Дочь обесчещенного отца, - сумрачно подхватила Марианна, - продолжайте, не церемоньтесь! (Марианна, т.I2, с.I95)

In his comparison of Asia and Natal'ia D.I. Pisarev noted that, in spite of their environment and upbringing, the two heroines "...retained the freshness and the healthy spirit in spite of all the conditions surrounding them, apart from the people who took it to be their right to command their thoughts and feelings."<sup>7</sup> The same could be said for all the heroines. A.G. Tseitlin wrote that what constitutes a "...distinctive singularity of the female figures of Turgenev..." is "...for all their external softness..." a retention of a "...total irreconcilability in their relationship to the conservative milieu in which they were brought up."<sup>8</sup>

It is in the description of the heroines' character that Turgenev is so exceptional. There are few heroines

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<sup>7</sup>Zelinskii, Sobranie kriticheskikh materialov, p.130, Translation here is mine.

<sup>8</sup>A.G. Tseitlin, Masterstvo Turgeneva romanista (Moscow: Sovetskii pisatel', 1959), p.140. Translation here is mine.





in Russian literature that are so constantly and so predictably endowed with such admirable character traits. They are young, determined, passionate, full of zeal and love of freedom, full of burning desire to be useful. It is interesting to note that the terms used in the heroines' description are so constant. All the heroines possess an "honest soul", or a "clear soul", or a "passionate nature". Here is a sample:

...честная, страстная и горячая натура...  
(Натаалья, т.6, с.294)

...с душой совершенно честной и прямой...  
(Натаалья, т.6, с.336)

...чистая женская душа... (Лиза, т.7, с.220)

...моя чистая девушка... (Елена, т.8, с.112)

...с вашим спокойным нравом, с вашей ясной душой! (Лиза, т.7, с.221)

Но Марианна, этот славный, верный товарищ, эта чистая, страстная душа, эта чудесная девушка... (Марианна, т.12, с.121)

Вся проникнутая чувством долга...  
(Лиза, т.7, с.243)

...она с детства жаждала деятельности, деятельного добра... (Елена, т.8, с.33)

Слабость возмущала ее, глупость сердила, ложь она не прощала "во веки веков"; требования ее ни перед чем не отступали, самые молитвы не раз мешались с укором.  
(Елена, т.8, с.32)

Я заглянул в эту душу: тайный гнет давил ее постоянно, тревожно путалось и билось неопытное самолюбие, но все существо ее стремилось к правде. (Ася, т.7, с.98)



Марианна принадлежала к особенному разряду  
...существ... Справедливость удовлетворяет,  
но не радуется их, а несправедливость, на  
которую они страшно чутки, возмущает их до  
дна души. (Марианна, т.12, с.94)

Но от всего ее существа веяло чем-то сильным  
и смелым, чем-то стремительным и страстным.  
(Марианна, т.12, с.43)

Но взгляд ее задумчиво-спокойный  
Я больше всех любил: я видел в нем  
Возможность страсти горестной и знойной,  
Золот души, любящей божеством.  
(Параша, т.6, с.77)

Она чувствовала глубоко и сильно, но  
тайно... (Наталья, т.6, с.279)

Вы не глядите, что она такая тихая:  
страсти в ней сильные и характер тоже ой-ой!  
(Наталья, т.6, с.303)

Всегда, во всем благородна и великодушна!  
О, сердце девушки – это чистое золото!  
(Наталья, т.6, с.322)

The first portrayal of a Turgenevan heroine we encounter in the author's earliest important work "Parasha". Already in this heroine, in many ways a precursor of the heroines to come, Turgenev shows the longing, the waiting for someone or something. Richard Freeborn described Parasha as "...artless but capable of deep emotion, innocent but not inspid, awakened to life through her love but not sentimentalized...."<sup>9</sup> At the same time it should be pointed out that Turgenev's heroines are dreamers. They feel

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<sup>9</sup>Freeborn, Turgenev: The Novelist's Novelist, p.24.



a need of fulfillment and Turgenev depicts this longing and desire in a consistent way:

Там – через ровный луг – от их села  
Верстах в пяти, – дорога шла большая;  
И, как змея, свивалась и ползла  
И, дальний лес украдкой огибая,  
Ее всю душу за собой влекла.  
Озарена каким-то блеском дивным,  
Земля чужая вдруг являлась ей...  
И кто-то милый голосом призывным  
Так чудно пел и говорил о ней.  
Таинственной исполненные муки,  
Над ней, звеня, носились эти звуки...  
И вот – искал ее молящий взор  
Других небес, высоких, пышных гор...  
(Параша, т. I, с. 79)

Дядя Сипягин приютил Марианну у себя в доме.  
Но жить в зависимости было ей тошно; она  
рвалась на волю всеми силами неподатливой души...  
(Марианна, т. I2, с. 43)

Все, что окружало ее, казалось ей не то  
бессмысленным, не то непонятным.  
(Елена, т. 8, с. 35)

– Пойти куда-нибудь далеко, на молитву, на  
трудный подвиг, – продолжала она. – А то  
дни уходят, жизнь уйдет, а что мы сделали?  
(Ася, т. 7, с. 99)

Отчего я с завистью гляжу на пролетающих птиц?  
Кажется полетела бы с ними, полетела – куда, не  
знаю, только далеко, далеко отсюда.  
(Елена, т. 8, с. 79)

...О, если бы кто-нибудь мне сказал: вот  
что ты должна делать! Быть доброю – этого  
мало; делать добро...да; это главное в жизни.  
(Елена, т. 8, с. 80)

...глядела куда-то в даль своими странными,  
словно потемневшими и расширенными глазами,  
а поколебленные легким движением воздуха,  
концы тонких лент слегка приподнимались у  
ней за плечами, словно крылья.  
(Ирина, т. 9, с. I89)





The heroines do not experience love and affection in their families. Often, they are misunderstood and feared by parents or relatives with whom they live.

...мать ей не доверяла, а отцу становилось неловко, когда она устремляла на него свои таинственные глаза; (Ирина, т.12, с.181)

...отец, который гордился ею, пока она слыла за необыкновенного ребенка, стал ее бояться, когда она выросла, и говорил о ней, что она какая-то восторженная республиканка, бог знает в кого! (Елена, т.8, с.32)

Сипягина считала ее нигилисткой и безбожницей; (Марианна, т.12, с.43)

It is into such an environment and such an emotional background of these young women that there arrives

...the stranger, the unknown or only partly known quantity, ...who steps into the fiction and at once provides the elements of newness and contrast. All Turgenev's heroes are strangers to the situations of their respective novels: Rudin, Lavretsky, Insarov, Bazarov, Litvinov, Nezhdanov, while his heroines are integral parts of their novels' 'place', although they may still enter the fiction as unknown or only partly known quantities.<sup>10</sup>

The hero who appears on the scene fascinates the heroine because, with his worldly knowledge, he appears to open up a new world to the heroine, a world of new ideas, a world of new plans for the future, and a world of promised action. Pisarev pointed out, that men come into contact with "many varied spheres of life: their parents' house, gymnasium, the university, a government position, or a regiment,

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<sup>10</sup> Freeborn, Turgenev: The Novelist's Novelist, p.54.





masquerades, taverns, editing a paper..." and "all of these," he claims, "are schools of life."<sup>11</sup> And the man with this varied experience appears as an educator to the heroine.

Rudin, for instance, is a fount of new ideas to Natal'ya; Lavretsky offers a new vision of the world to Liza; Insarov is an inspiration to Elena; ...Litvinov offers hope of renewal to Irina - and in each case it is the ideas proffered by the hero that seem to have the major appeal to the heroine. For these ideas are the product of a different social experience, a different education, a different conditioning and the heroine is attracted to the newness of these ideas as if they were guarantees of new and nobler psychological or individual characteristics in the hero.<sup>12</sup>

The words of Mar'ia Aleksandrovna in "Correspondence" outline the pattern which Turgenev was to follow in the majority of his works.

Вы со мной наверно согласитесь, что мы женщины, по крайней мере те из нас, которые не удовлетворяются обыкновенными заботами домашней жизни, получаем свое окончательное образование все-таки от вас-мужчин: вы на нас имеете сильное и большое влияние. Теперь посмотрите, что вы делаете с нами. Станем говорить о молодых девушках, особенно о тех, которые, как я, живут в глуши, а таких очень много в России. Притом же я других не знаю и не могу судить о них. Представьте себе такую девушку. Вот ее воспитание кончено; она начинает жить, веселиться; но одного веселья ей мало. Она много требует от жизни, она читает,

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<sup>11</sup>D.I. Pisarev, Sochineniia (Moscow: Gos. izdat. khudozhestvennoi literatury, 1955), v. 1, p.212. (Hereinafter referred to as Sochineniia.) Translation here is mine.

<sup>12</sup>Freeborn, Turgenev: The Novelist's Novelist, p.54.



мечтает...о любви!... - скажите вы...  
 Положим: но для нее это слово много значит.  
 Я опять-таки скажу, что говорю о такой  
 девушке, которой не тягостно и скучно мыслить...  
 Она оглядывается, ждет, когда же придет тот,  
 о ком ее душа тоскует... Наконец он является:  
 она увлечена; она в руках его, как мягкий воск.  
 Все - и счастье, и любовь, и мысль - все вместе  
 с ним нахлынуло разом; все ее тревоги успокоены,  
 все сомнения разрешены им; устами его, кажется,  
 говорит сама истина; она благоговеет  
 перед ним, стыдится своего счастья, учится,  
 любит. (т.6, с.171)

The man usually speaks with enthusiasm and fiery zeal. He gets carried away and speaks about his past and about his future with abandon.

И слова его полились рекою. Он говорил прекрасно, горячо, убедительно - о позоре малодушия и лени, о необходимости делать дело. (Рудин, т.6, с.283)

...продолжая стоять перед Марианной и держать ее руку, Нежданов с увлечением, с жаром, с неожиданным для него самого красноречием сообщил Марианне свои планы, намерения, причину, заставившую его принять предложение Сипягина, - все свои связи, знакомства, свое прошедшее, все, что он скрывал, что никому не высказывал! (Нежданов, т.12, с.105)

As for the heroine, she listens with excitement and delight, she listens attentively to this teacher, this hero.

Она его слушала внимательно, жадно; на первых порах она изумилась....Но это чувство тотчас исчезло. Благодарность, гордость, преданность, решимость - вот чем переполнялась ее душа. (Марианна, т.12, с.105)

...у Натальи лицо покрылось алой краской, и взор ее, неподвижно устремленный на Рудина, и потемнел и заблестал... (Наталья, т.6, с.265)



Елена слушала его с пожирающим, глубоким и печальным вниманием.

(Елена, т.8, с.68)

...она так мило, так внимательно его слушала;  
(Лиза, т.7, с.211)

The heroine is young and impressionable. She is inexperienced and she thirsts for knowledge and new experience. The hero in these circumstances becomes her guide and her teacher.

Он тайком давал ей книги, поверял ей свои планы, читал ей первые страницы предполагаемых статей и сочинений.

(Рудин, т.6, с.289)

...он чувствовал потребность говорить с Лизой, сообщить ей все, что приходило ему в душу...

(Лаврецкий, т.7, с.211)

...я могу сказать, что имею на нее влияние большое и как бы воспитываю ее...

(П.А.Б., т.7, с.32)

...она повергала на суд его свои мысли, свои сомнения; он был ее наставником, ее вождем.

(Натаалья, т.6, с.289)

– Скажите мне, что я должна читать? скажите, что я должна делать? Я все буду делать, что вы мне скажете, – прибавила она, с невинной доверчивостью обратясь ко мне.

(Ася, т.7, с.104)

Он мне рассказал свои планы...

(Елена, т.8, с.84)

Давно ли она познакомилась с ним, с этим человеком, который и в церковь редко ходит, и так равнодушно переносит кончину жены, – и вот уже она сообщает ему свои тайны ... Правда, он принимает в ней участие; она сама верит ему и чувствует к нему влечение...

(Лиза, т.7, с.224)





The heroine's youth and inexperience prompt the hero to give advice in her personal matters without realizing that such seemingly intimate concern prompts the heroine to believe him and to trust him even more. The hero gains her trust without being aware of his doing so.

Вы еще молоды; но, сколько бы вы ни жили,  
слушайте всегда внушениям вашего сердца,  
не подчиняйтесь ни своему, ни чужому уму.  
(Рудин, т.6, с.337)

- Слушайтесь вашего сердца; оно одно вам  
скажет правду, - перебил ее Лаврецкий...  
- Опыт, рассудок - все это прах и суета!  
(Лаврецкий, т.7, с.2II)

The hero awakens in the heroine a powerful feeling which she cannot identify, to which she reacts physically in the form of paleness and ill health, fever and the like; she also reacts psychologically in the form of fear and great disquietude at not understanding the powerful feeling that came over her. She cannot find a name for it, she does not understand what is happening to her and when she does realize that she has fallen in love, this knowledge does not eliminate the fear of the new-born feeling. Following the realization that she is in love, her fears and anxieties persist but so does the determination that nothing will prevent her from loving the man who has awakened these dormant feelings in her; the man who was her teacher, her leader, and finally the object of her love. This is how Turgenev depicts the birth of love:





Ей самой стало страшно всего того, что она вдруг почувствовала в себе...  
(Наталья, т.6, с.308)

Лиза в несколько дней стала не та, какую он ее знал: в ее движениях, голосе, в самом смехе замечалась тайная тревога, небывалая прежде неровность.  
(Лиза, т.7, с.228)

...Рыдания ее усиливаются... и вдруг сквозь эти рыдания услышал я... Ну, словом я услышал, что она вас любит.  
(Ася, т.7, с.107)

— Нет, скажите, вы любите меня?  
— Мне кажется...да... — прошептала она.  
. . . . .  
Пустите меня, мне страшно...  
(Наталья, т.6, с.312)

Чувство...заменилось чем-то другим, чего она пока не понимала.  
(Елена, т.8, с.78)

...но слово не выразит того, что происходило в чистой душе девушки: оно было тайной для нее самой;...  
(Лиза, т.7, с.234)

...что происходило на этом лице, вероятно бы его изумило: и страх, и радость выражало оно, и какое-то блаженное изнеможение, и тревогу...  
(Ирина, т.9, с.255)

О чем она плакала — бог знает! Она сама не знала от чего у ней так внезапно полились слезы. Она утирала их, но они бежали вновь, как вода из давно накопившегося родника.  
(Наталья, т.6, с.292)

Первым ощущением Елены, когда она проснулась, был радостный испуг...

. . . . .  
Но в течение утра Еленой понемногу овладело беспокойство, а в следующие дни ей стало томно и скучно. Правда, она теперь знала, чего она хотела, но от этого ей не было легче.  
(Елена, т.8, с.101)

Она глядит с задумчивым вниманьем,  
Не понимая сердца своего...  
(Параша, т.1, с.89)



Она его боится, но приятен  
 Ей этот страх – и робости своей  
 Она едва ль не радуется тайно.  
 (Параша, т.І, с.90)

Когда же ей случалось остаться с ним наедине,  
 в ней, вместо прежней доверчивости, проявлялось  
 замешательство; она не знала, что сказать ему,  
 и он сам чувствовал смущение.  
 (Лиза, т.7, с.228)

...она вышла к нам вся бледная, молчаливая,  
 с потупленными глазами.  
 (Ася, т.7, с.97)

Как мне назвать ту страстную тоску,  
 Ту грустную, невольную тревогу,  
 Которая берет вас понемногу...  
 К чему нам лицемерить – о друзья! –  
 Ее любовью называю я.  
 (Параша, т.І, с.90)

Лиза в несколько дней стала не та, какую  
 он ее знал: в ее движениях, голосе, в  
 самом смехе замечалась тайная тревога,  
 небывалая прежде неровность.  
 (Лиза, т.7, с.228)

A.S. Pushkin already emphasized the woman's moral soundness, honesty, virtue and purity of character; she emerged superior to "the superfluous men" of the gentry intelligentsia, who, in spite of their education withered away and wasted their talents on fruitless reflection which made them totally unfit for life struggle. Turgenev both deepened and developed this type of contrast between his heroes and his heroines.



### CHAPTER III

#### THE FUNCTION OF THE HEROINES

The attributes of the Turgenevan heroine have been discussed, as well as her background, her education and her desires.

Next, the function that the heroine has in the scope of Turgenev's work will be examined. Function was already discussed as an act of a character that bears significance "for the course of the action."<sup>1</sup> The present study is intended to show that the heroine's function was to test the hero. Her test has a great significance for the subsequent action of the novel or of the short story. The hero does not meet the challenge of the heroine and from then on the relationship deteriorates with variations in the dénouement of the story.

One can say that Turgenev's heroine is timeless in the sense that, especially as far as her function is concerned, she appears basically unchanged at various times in Turgenev's forty-year creative spectrum.

...Turgenev made use of the Pushkinian formula of contrast between hero and heroine ...in which the role of the heroine was that of a yardstick of all that is natural and emotionally unaffected,

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<sup>1</sup>Propp, Morphology of the Folktale, p.21.



against which the hero's falseness was to be judged.<sup>2</sup>

The heroines' basic attributes also remain the same although the social scene in which we find Parasha, in the poem of the same name written in 1843, is quite different from the social scene in which we find Marianna in Virgin Soil, written in 1877.

The variety of heroes, on the other hand is quite striking. There is quite a difference between a Rudin of the 1830's, a Bazarov of the 1860's and a Solomin of the 1870's. There is a difference in the social and political climate in which these novels are set and Turgenev himself wrote in his "Predislovie k romanam" that he

...стремился, насколько хватало сил и умения, добросовестно и беспристрастно изобразить и воплотить в надлежащие типы и то, что Шекспир называет: "the body and pressure of time", и ту быстро изменявшуюся физиономию русских людей культурного слоя, который преимущественно служил предметом моих наблюдений. (т.I2, с.303)

Since the men represent the intellectual forces in Turgenev's novels, it is not surprising to find interesting polemics in which the heroes express the philosophy, the ideals, the political, social and esthetic views, that in retrospect read as a chronicle or a history of Russian intelligentsia between the ages of 1830-1880, which roughly corresponds to the writing span of this famous Russian writer. Although

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<sup>2</sup>Freeborn, Turgenev: The Novelist's Novelist, p.27.







this work does not attempt to trace the social development of the hero through the four decades it is absolutely essential that a few words be said about him vis à vis the heroine in order to define her function more precisely. The heroes' divergence stems from the fact that they reflected the "bystro izmeniaivshuiusia fizionomiiu russkikh liudei kul'turnogo sloia" and by virtue of that fact they embodied all the different aspirations and anxieties of a particular age. We have Rudin's in the 1830's, we have Lavretskii's in the 1840's, we have Bazarov's in the 1850's, we have Litvinov's in the 1870's. Yet, as different as these heroes are in their outlook and their goals in life, they have one thing in common - their relationship toward women. Practically all of them have the same function in the heroines' lives. They are their teachers, their guides, and finally the objects of their love. All of them are incapable of perceiving what influence they have on the heroine, and they are incapable of perceiving that they are loved. Their reaction toward woman's love is strangely predictable. There is disbelief, there is joy, there is fear - and total inability to cope with the situation.

It is interesting that the heroes like Rudin - the intellectual of the 1830's and 1840's or the "superfluous man" as he is sometimes called, became a type in Russian literature: a type, which is often associated with other "superfluous men" in Russian literature, Onegin and Pechorin, for example. The heroines, however, do not



become types in the same sense that Pushkin's Tatyana became a type in Russian literature. Turgenev "stressed the moral purity and exactions, ... the spiritual depth," and "firmness" of the heroine, "everything that we now tacitly encompass into the conception of 'Turgenevan maidens'."<sup>3</sup> Yet, we do not have a single heroine who emerges as a type, we have a gallery of heroines, all endowed with the qualities which Turgenev simply admired most in a human being.

The heroine's love for the hero "...is represented as a challenge to his character, which he can either accept or fail to live up to, and the extent to which he succeeds or fails reveals the extent of his moral worth."<sup>4</sup>

When we examine the hero as a person, aside from his philosophy and political beliefs, we find almost exclusively a man who is indecisive, a soft creature who does not realize what influence his words have on the heroine, who is always surprised to be loved and whose reaction to love is predictable in almost all cases. The heroine experiences love as a gradual awakening of an unknown feeling. To the hero love comes suddenly like a bolt of lightning.

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<sup>3</sup>Tseitlin, Masterstvo Turgeneva romanista, p.139. Translation here is mine.

<sup>4</sup>Freeborn, Turgenev: The Novelist's Novelist, p.20.



То, что было между нами, промелькнуло  
мгновенно, как молния, и как молния  
принесло смерть и гибель...  
(П.А.Б., т.7, с.41)

Словно вспыхнула пожаром, словно  
грозовою тучею налетела любовь.  
(Литвинов, т.9, с.182)

Вспомнил он Москву, вспомнил, как  
"оно" и тогда налетело внезапною бурей.  
(Литвинов, т.9, с.260)

Freeborn understands the relationship of the hero and  
heroine as

the process of contrast ...brought to a heat at  
one vital moment when the promise of mutual  
happiness, previously an underlying assumption  
of the relationship, is irrevocably destroyed.  
In no novel is the cause exactly similar, but  
in each case it is due to the revelation of  
some incompatibility between hero and heroine,  
whether of personality or circumstance, that  
clearly prevents any further development in  
either relationship. It is at this moment  
that the hero's or the heroine's true nature,  
delineated during the process of contrast in  
which both of them have been involved, is  
finally revealed in its weakness or its  
nobility.<sup>5</sup>

The heroine appears as the cause of conflict in the hero's  
life. Her belief in him, her zeal and readiness for self-  
sacrifice put the man into a dilemma - should he take the  
heroine's hand and take her with him, or should he be  
"reasonable", act as an "honest" man and leave. Mar'ia  
Aleksandrovna's description of the heroine's total involve-  
ment in the hero's life echoes the feeling of numerous  
other heroines:

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<sup>5</sup>Freeborn, Turgenev: The Novelist's Novelist, p.55.





...она предается тому, что его занимает,  
каждое слово его западает ей в душу:  
(т.6, с.172)

It is this total dedication and trust that frightens the hero and forces him to reassess his ability to live up to the heroine's expectations of him. Let us examine one such case: that of the protagonist of the novel Virgin Soil, Aleksei Nezhdanov. The tragedy of Nezhdanov was that he felt he was under pressure to live up to a revolutionary image even when he became convinced that he was by nature a Hamlet. He ceased to believe in his capacity for work he at first thought was worthy of effort. He knew that the heroine, Marianna, fell in love with him because of his revolutionary sympathies and he knew there was no turning back without losing her love and respect.

Other heroines, as well, are unable to understand the hero. Liza's religious beliefs (A Nest of Gentlefolk) prevent her from understanding why Lavretskii was justified in leaving his wife; Natal'ia's comfortable background makes her unable to understand that Rudin could not in all honesty, let her become his mistress and force her to live with him in poverty; not having shared Nezhdanov's humiliating experiences with the peasants, Marianna cannot understand his disillusionment, etc.

In spite of this lack of understanding of the very real and practical side of life, the heroines of Turgenev emerge as more sympathetic, more passionate and more real than the heroes. Turgenev invariably shows how little the





heroes understand the heroines, how they underestimate their strength and consequently how unworthy they feel - and in Turgenev's opinion really are - of the heroines' love and trust. Turgenev characteristically felt that only the "doers", the men of action, would be worthy heroes for his heroines. He never described a contented poet who woos a beautiful "pure soul", who gives herself to him passionately and with whom he goes on to live a fulfilled private life. No, in Turgenev's opinion only a "doer" or someone trying to be a "doer" reflected the rapidly changing mood of society and this might be one of the reasons for his portrayal of the action-hungry heroes.

The heroine expresses her trust in the man and awaits his decision. This constitutes her test of the hero which is the essence of her function. Here are a few examples illustrating her trust and her test:

- Да какой совет могу я дать вам, Наталья Алексеевна?

- Какой совет? Вы мужчина; я привыкла вам верить, я до конца буду верить вам. Скажите мне, какие ваши намерения?

. . . . .

- Как вы думаете, что нам надобно теперь делать?

- Что нам делать? - возразил Рудин, - разумеется покориться.

- Покориться, - медленно повторила Наталья, и губы ее побледнели. (Наталья, т.6, с.323)

- Оставайтесь, - воскликнул я, - оставайтесь, прошу вас. Вы имеете дело с честным человеком - да, с честным человеком. Но, ради бога, что взволновало вас? Разве вы заметили во мне какую перемену? (Ася, т.7, с.II3)

Она была так близка, она пришла ко мне с полной решимостью, в полной невинности



сердца и чувств, она принесла мне свою нетронутую молодость...и я не прижал ее к своей груди, я лишил себя блаженства увидеть, как ее милое лицо расцвело бы радостью и тишиною вострога...  
(Ася, т.7, с.II6)

- Что вы теперь намерены сделать?  
Я смутился и торопливо, глухим голосом, отвечал, что намерен исполнить долг честного человека - удалиться, "потому что, - прибавил я, - я вас люблю, Вера Николаевна, вы, вероятно, давно это заметили".  
(Вера, т.7, с.43)

Вера иногда озиралась с таким выражением, как будто спрашивала себя: не во сне ли она? И в то же время на лице ее была написана решимость. А я...я не мог прийти в себя. Вера меня любит! Эти слова беспрестанно вращались в моем уме; но я не понимал их, - ни себя не понимал я, ни ее. Я не верил такому неожиданному, такому потрясающему счастью... (Вера, т.7, с.44)

The heroine lacks any experience of reality because of her education, because of her background, because of her youth. She depends on the hero to make the practical decisions concerning their relationship. The ideas of the outside world have been communicated to her by the hero and he in his enthusiasm did not himself understand how he would bring his ideas into action. Here are a few passages illustrating the heroines' lack of understanding reality:

...мы успеем, ты увидишь, мы будем полезны, наша жизнь не пропадет даром, мы пойдем в народ... Ты знаешь какоенибудь ремесло? Нет? ну, все равно - мы будем работать, мы принесем им, нашим братьям, все что знаем, - я если нужно, в кухарки пойду, в швей, в прачки.... Ты увидишь, ты увидишь...



и никакой тут заслуги не будет - а счастье, счастье... (Марианна, т.12, с.163)

- Деньги у меня есть, - перебила Елена, -  
восемьдесят рублей.  
- Ну, это не много, - заметил Инсаров, -  
а все годится.  
- Да я могу достать, я займу, я попрошу у  
мамаши... Нет, я у ней просить не буду...  
Да можно часы продать... У меня серьги есть...  
два браслета...кружево.  
(Елена, т.8, с.112)

The power of love and the possibility of happiness  
and fulfillment are too strong and too tempting for the  
man to give up. Yet he thinks of immediate flight.

Мне следовало бежать, как только я почувствовал,  
что люблю ее, люблю замужнюю женщину; но я  
остался - ... (П.А.Б., т.7, с.50)

Как человек честный и справедливый, он  
понимал важность обязанностей святость  
долга и почел бы за стыд хитрить с самим  
собой, с своей слабостью, с своим проступком.  
. . . . .  
"Остается одно, - думал он опять, - бежать,  
бежать немедленно..."  
(Литвинов, т.9, с.251)

He does not flee, however, and the farewell scene which is  
inevitable for Turgenev's hero and heroine takes place.  
The heroine's testing of the hero and the subsequent part-  
ing are constants of all the works discussed here, except  
"Parasha". The reasons for parting stem from (1) basic  
irreconcilable differences between hero and heroine which  
become apparent following their confrontation - Rudin, Asya,  
Smoke, Virgin Soil; (2) a set of fateful circumstances:  
return of the hero's wife - A Nest of Gentlefolk, apparition  
of the heroine's mother and subsequent illness and death of





the heroine - "Faust", the hero's death - On the Eve, the hero's falling desperately in love with another woman - "Correspondence".

A happy domesticity is not what the heroines dream about and nowhere in the works analyzed in the present study, do we find a depiction of a happy, fulfilling marriage between the hero and the heroine. Children, and all other conventional signs of happy domesticity are not part of Turgenev's world. Only twice do we find the protagonists married. Parasha marries her hero, only to live a frustrated, unfulfilled life:

Что ж мне сказать о ней? Признаться вам,  
Ее никто не назовет счастливой  
Вполне...она вздыхает по часам  
И в памяти хранит как совершенство  
Невинности нелепое блаженство!  
(Параша, т.I, с.I00)

Elena in On the Eve also marries her hero. They are happy for a few weeks but he dies without having achieved what he wanted to achieve and Elena accepts his death as a fact decreed by fate, and blames her love of him for his death.

...кто знает, может быть, я его убила;  
.....  
Я искала счастья - и найду, быть может,  
смерть. Видно так следовало; видно была  
вина... (Елена, т.8, с.I65)

P.V. Evstaf'ev while discussing the male characters claims that "...the education given in bygone days in the patrician milieu could not have developed an unimpaired





energetic and moral character... ."6 Turgenev's heroes produce such an impression. Yet, the heroines who come from a similar patrician milieu and who are brought up more strictly because they are women and are expected to become "kak vse"7, emerge superior to the men, for all their education, maturity and experience. They emerge superior because they retain a moral freshness, an inner fire and an individuality in spite of the oppressive environment. Their ability to abandon themselves totally to feeling and passion is where they differ from the hero and establish a superiority over him.

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<sup>6</sup>Zelinskii, Sobranie kriticheskikh materialov, p.178. Translation here is mine.

<sup>7</sup>Turgenev, "On the Eve," Polnoe sobranie sochinenii (Moscow: Izd-vo Nauka, 1964), v.8., p.105.



## CHAPTER IV

### TURGENEV'S ATTITUDE TOWARD HIS HEROINES

In this chapter the reasons for Turgenev's portrayal of his heroines in such a predictable manner will be examined. This study will try to show that the author could not be objective in respect to feminine characters because of his own ambivalent stand toward women. On the one hand, in Turgenev's view, women were a part of the mysterious and inexplicable world of nature and human passions and thus were unpredictable, forever changing, impenetrable. On the other hand, women were the sources of the greatest, if not the only, happiness and fulfillment available in this world. In order to explain the creation of the heroine in such a unique way one has to examine Turgenev's relationships toward women in his life as well as his attitude toward human happiness in general and toward man's fate in particular.

Turgenev claimed that his autobiography could be found in his works and in a letter to Count Tolstoy he admitted that "...perhaps...there enters into a literary work more of that part of the soul which it isn't comfortable to show to anyone."<sup>1</sup> This claim then led to an

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<sup>1</sup>Avrahm Yarmolinsky, Turgenev: The Man, His Art and His Age (New York: Orion Press, 1959), p.365.



examination of Turgenev's biography in search of some clues that would explain his attitude toward his feminine characters. Referring to Turgenev, George Brandes, for instance, pointed out that it is in " - the relation of the artist to his own creations - that every weakness of either the man or the poet must necessarily appear."<sup>2</sup>

The fact that the work of great writers often, if not usually, reflects their own personal characteristics, inner turmoil, and life experiences is, of course, well known. Thus, André Maurois in his book Seven Faces of Love discusses the unhappiness that the 19th century French novelist Stendhal experienced in his personal life. Maurois claims that Stendhal, not being able to attain happiness in real life, through his novels "...offered himself...women, so beautiful, so intelligent, so perfectly capable of love, whom he had not chanced to encounter in life."<sup>3</sup> This statement could be justifiably applied to Turgenev, for in their unhappiness in love and in their projection of this unhappiness into their work Stendhal and Turgenev have much in common.

Turgenev was born into a wealthy family of landed gentry. In his childhood the most dominant figure in the

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<sup>2</sup>P.A. Kropotkin, Russian Literature: Ideals and Realities (London: Duckworth, 1905), pp.94-95.

<sup>3</sup>André Maurois, Seven Faces of Love (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company Inc. 1962), p.104.



family was unquestionably his mother. A cruel, unscrupulous and tyrannical woman, she was to represent everything that Turgenev later hated in life. One of the most vivid examples of his mother's cruelty, and one that affected Turgenev deeply, was her treatment of the serfs on her estates. She ruled over them with extreme ruthlessness and did not hesitate to inflict severe punishments for minor infringements. Corporal punishment, separation of families, and exile to Siberia were not unusual. These early experiences created such a horror and revulsion in Turgenev that he readily embraced liberal tendencies, later strengthened through his friendship with other well-known Russian liberals, such as Belinskii, Herzen, Nekrasov, and Granovskii. In fact, in his A Sportsman's Sketches, he comes to the defense of the oppressed and pleads for a more humane outlook.

Turgenev's father came from an old and respected but impoverished family and he married Varvara Lutovinova because she was rich. Turgenev was unhappy as a child and often physically punished by his mother without any interference from his father. His father, Sergei Turgenev, was handsome and it was a well-known fact that he was a ladies' man. The family atmosphere in which Turgenev grew up was not happy. As concerns love, Turgenev never knew the gentle, kind and stable relationship. His father, a graceful nobleman, was involved in liaisons with many women. Turgenev's first experience of love was tarnished and ended







tragically when he found out that the object of his adolescent fantasies was his father's mistress. He portrayed the force of this destructive passion of love in his short story "First Love." Passion is shown as an all-powerful feeling that enslaves even the most strong and willful persons and the strength of this passion is such that it dims all other feelings. Turgenev himself fell passionately in love with a famous French singer who was married, who was powerful and domineering, who with her forceful personality enslaved him, without whose presence he felt he could not live or even create. Even when the passion itself was gone, he

...could never escape from the charm of Pauline Viardot. He was to trail across Europe after her; practically all his future travels and places of domicile were the result of his infatuation for her; he was to correspond with her, live next door to her, become a recognized part of her life; finally he was to die in her arms.<sup>4</sup>

In a striking contrast to Turgenev's personal experience of love was his depiction of the birth, the growth, and the beauty of love as experienced and offered by his heroines.

His life was dominated by a passion for a single woman who did not return this feeling and who could not give him what he wanted most in life - "...this insurmountable impulse toward union, toward complete self-surrender,

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<sup>4</sup>Freeborn, Turgenev: The Novelist's Novelist, p.12.



where everything earthly is lost in some fine fire..."<sup>5</sup>

The love and passion that Turgenev felt for Pauline Viardot was unrequited. Still, he could not shake off the hold which her charm had on him. This attachment of his lasted forty years and Turgenev, recognizing his position vis à vis Mme Viardot, realized also, that she did not love him.

In spite of this he wrote passionate letters to her as his

"...theuerste Freundin, einziges, entgebetetes Wesen..."<sup>6</sup>

in which he assured her that he is "...so happy that everything in you is so intricately bound up with me..." and

"If I am a tree, then you are both my roots and my crown!"<sup>7</sup>

In another letter he tells her, "I cannot live far from you.

I must feel and enjoy your dear presence near me."<sup>8</sup>

Like so many of his heroes, Turgenev was weak and indecisive, intelligent but passive. In his reminiscences Henry James described him as

...the model rather of the strong man at rest: massive and towering, with the voice of innocence and the smile almost of childhood. What seemed still more of a contradiction to so much of him, however, was that his work was all delicacy and fancy, penetration and compression.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Yarmolinsky, Turgenev: The Man, His Art and His Age, p.376.

<sup>6</sup>Turgenev, "Pis'ma," Polnoe sobranie sochinenii, v. 6, p.398.

<sup>7</sup>David Magarshack, Turgenev: A Life (London: Faber and Faber, 1954), p.227.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p.228

<sup>9</sup>Donald Davie, ed., Russian Literature and Modern English Fiction: A Collection of Critical Essays (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1965), p.51.



D.N. Ovsianiko-Kulikovskii claims that "A free spirit - not enslaved by a favorite idea or a dream - seeks complements and is happy to encounter contrasts; his soul is open to objective relationships toward people... ." <sup>10</sup> In Ovsianiko-Kulikovskii's view, Turgenev possessed this type of spirit - in "...his personal life, as well as in his work." <sup>11</sup> The same critic goes on to say that

...a real artist - not merely a story teller - remains true to himself in the sphere of his creation and he continues to live and enters into the same kind of real communication with the characters he creates, a trait which is distinctive in his relationships with real people. He will be as objective or as subjective in his work as he is in his personal life. <sup>12</sup>

It is true that Turgenev, who described himself as a realist, might have had an objective view concerning several aspects of reality, political and artistic views, for example. But if it is true that he could be objective in relation to his characters in literature only to the extent that he was objective to people in his own life, then an examination of his life and of his works leads us to the inescapable conclusion that he could not be objective toward women either in his life or in his works. If we examine his heroines carefully, we see that he "...refers

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<sup>10</sup> Pokrovskii, I.S. Turgenev: Ego zhizn' i sochineniia, (Moscow: Sklad v knizhnom magazine Spiridonova, 1908) pp.300-301. Translation here is mine.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p.301. Translation here is mine.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p.301. Translation here is mine.





to the woman as to something unknown, as to some beautiful and delicate enigma, fleeing from the human heart together with illusions of sublime and noble love."<sup>13</sup> There is not a single Turgenevan woman to whom the phrase, uttered by Marfa Timofeevna in A Nest of Gentlefolk, could not refer:

Чужая душа, ты знаешь, темный лес, а  
девичья и подавно.<sup>14</sup>

He could not be objective toward women because he himself was a slave to his passion for Mme Viardot. In a letter to Annenkov this attitude is evident:

Я остаюсь здесь до 16-го числа и еду прямо в Куртавнель, к м-ме Виардо, где я пробуду до 1 августа, то есть до эпохи морских купаний на Уайте. М-ме Виардо этого желает, а для меня ее воля - закон.<sup>15</sup>

And this was true in spite of the fact that Turgenev knew that his feelings were not reciprocated and that Mme Viardot regarded him only as a friend, as is evident from the following statement with which Turgenev concludes the above letter:

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<sup>13</sup>S. Kostiamin, Turgenevskiiia zhenshchiny: Kriticheskii ètiud (Vitebsk: Gubernskaia tipo-litografiia, 1896), p.5. Translation here is mine.

<sup>14</sup>Turgenev, "A Nest of Gentlefolk," Polnoe sobranie sochinenii, v. 7, p.182.

<sup>15</sup>V.V. Grigorenko, et al., eds., I.S. Turgenev v vospominaniakh sovremennikov (Moscow: Izdat. Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1969), v. 1, p.312.





Ей хочется отдохнуть в спокойном дружеском обществе.<sup>16</sup>

Turgenev's total devotion and slave-like submission to Mme Viardot was shown in yet another incident in his life. A.A. Fet, in his reminiscences, quotes Turgenev concerning the latter's decision to place his illegitimate daughter into the household of Mme Viardot to be brought up with her own children. This decision was taken on Mme Viardot's explicit advice and after prolonged deliberation about the fate of illegitimate children in Russia. Turgenev then writes:

И не в одном этом отношении, - прибавил Тургенев, воодушевляясь, - я подчинен воле этой женщины. Нет! она давно и навсегда заслонила от меня все остальное, и так мне и надо...<sup>17</sup>

Richard Freeborn states that "...the central thesis of Turgenev's philosophy of life..." consists in "...whether man has any right to personal happiness in defiance of the impersonal destiny which makes him no more than a creature of a single day, born yesterday and already gone tomorrow."<sup>18</sup> There is in Turgenev an insatiable desire for happiness which he never experienced and which he never described

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<sup>16</sup>Grigorenko, et al., eds., I.S. Turgenev v vospominaniakh sovremennikov, v. 1, p.312. Italics here are mine.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p.198.

<sup>18</sup>Freeborn, Turgenev: The Novelist's Novelist, p.110.



in his work. All his life he yearned for fulfillment and it is this yearning that he captures with such grace and beauty in describing the aspirations of his heroines. Turgenev was perpetually to regret the loss of his youth because in his opinion it is only youth that can offer the enthusiasm, the hope, the emotional force and the courage. Yet in Turgenev's case these hopes remained illusive and unattained. He, as his heroes, could easily sigh with Pushkin:

А счастье было так возможно,  
Так близко!.. Но судьба моя  
Уж решена.<sup>19</sup>

Nowhere is the irretrievable loss of the opportunities of youth more apparent than in Turgenev's views of home and family life. As he grew older, he came to regret the lack of his own "nest", which, he believed, can be attained only in one's youth. His life-long attachment to Mme Viardot, Turgenev thought, prevented him from having his own home and later on in life he became even more aware of his false position of a "family friend" in the Viardot household.

If we examine what he himself wrote about happiness and then compare it to how he portrays happiness in his work, we find that not letting his heroes and heroines attain happiness was the only way he could approach the subject.

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<sup>19</sup>A.S. Pushkin, "Evgenii Onegin," Sobranie sochinenii (Moscow: Gos. izdat. Khudozhestvennoi Literatury, 1960), v. 4, p.176.



Since we are not considering any of his social treatises but rather examining a very subjective attitude, we can see that his views on happiness influenced not only the dénouement of his short stories but cast a certain shadow over the whole question of what the role of a woman is in determining a man's happiness. The idea that happiness is fleeting ("Asya"), that it is sinful and therefore punished (On the Eve, A Nest of Gentlefolk), that it does not depend on us (A Nest of Gentlefolk), that it is illusive even in a marriage that the heroine herself attained ("Parasha"), represents the core of Turgenev's personal philosophy. Here are some examples of his attitude toward happiness as they appear in the works under discussion.

Я чуть было не постучал в окно. Я хотел тогда же сказать Гагину, что я прошу руки его сестры. Но такое сватанье в такую пору... "До завтра, - подумал я, - завтра я буду счастлив..."  
(Н.Н., т.7, с.117)

Завтра я буду счастлив! У счастья нет завтрашнего дня; у него нет и вчерашнего; оно не помнит прошедшего, не думает о будущем; у него есть настоящее - и то не день, а мгновение.  
(Н.Н., т.7, с.117)

- Вот как мы должны были увидеться, - проговорил он наконец.  
Лиза приняла руки от лица.  
- Да, - сказала она глухо, - мы скоро были наказаны.  
(Лиза, т.7, с.272)

"...Я была счастлива не одни только минуты, не часы, не целые дни - нет, целые недели



сразу. А с какого права?" Ей стало страшно своего счастья. "А если этого нельзя? - подумала она." (Елена, т.8, с.157)

"А ведь уж я тогда знала, что он меня любит, - подумала она, - да и прежде... Ай, нет! нет! Это грех." (Елена, т.8, с.157)

Ах, Лиза, Лиза! - воскликнул Лаврецкий, - как бы мы могли быть счастливы! Лиза опять взглянула на него. - Теперь вы сами видите, Федор Иванович, что счастье зависит не от нас, а от бога. (Лиза, т.7, с.273)

Annenkov noted in his reminiscences that

...no one noticed a melancholy shadow in the life of Turgenev; he was, however, in his own eyes an unhappy man: he missed a woman's love and attachment, for which he searched from an early age.<sup>20</sup>

And he concluded this statement as follows:

...his search for the ideal woman helped him to create that Olympus, which he populated with the noblest female beings, great in their simplicity and in their aspirations.<sup>21</sup>

"Turgenev himself," says Annenkov, "suffered because he was conscious of not being able to conquer a woman's soul and rule over her: he could only torture her."<sup>22</sup> According

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<sup>20</sup>Grigorenko, et al., eds., I.S. Turgenev v vospominaniakh sovremennikov, v. 1, p.107. Translation here is mine.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p.107. Translation here is mine.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p.107. Translation here is mine.







to Annenkov, Turgenev "lacked insolence, folly and total blindness," in order "to triumph in the clashes of passion."<sup>23</sup> Turgenev could not abandon himself to any cause or to anything totally and completely. He himself was not unlike the indecisive heroes he portrayed. The softness of his character is well portrayed in the reminiscences of Grigorovich, who described him as being weak of will, totally devoid of aggression, referring to himself as "ovech'ia natura."<sup>24</sup> These weaknesses manifested themselves only in his personal life, however.

Turgenev felt sad and embittered sometimes, feeling that life had passed him by without his having experienced the happiness of a domesticity of his own. This is reflected in his correspondence. In a letter to Tolstoy's sister Mar'ia Nikolaevna he writes:

Видите ли, мне было горько стариться, не изведав полного счастья – и не свив себе покойного гнезда. Душа во мне была еще молода и рвалась и тосковала; а ум, охлажденный опытом, изредка поддаваясь ее порывам, вымещал на ней свою слабость горечью и иронией... Когда вы меня знали, я еще мечтал о счастье, не хотел расстаться с надеждой; теперь я окончательно махнул на все это рукой... (Письма, т.3, с.65)

Similarly, in a letter to M.A. Markovich:

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<sup>23</sup> Grigorenko, et al., eds., I.S. Turgenev v vospominaniakh sovremennikov, v. 1, p.107. Translation here is mine.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., pp.258-262. Translation here is mine.



Я сижу перед окном...в сад... Все очень тихо вокруг: слышатся детские голоса и шаги (у г-жи Виардо прелестные дети) - в саду воркуют дикие голуби - а малиновка распевает; ветер веет мне в лицо - а на сердце у меня - едва ли не старческая грусть. Нет счастья вне семьи - и вне родины; каждый сиди на своем гнезде и пускай корни в родную землю... Что лепиться к краешку чужого гнезда?... (Письма, т.3, с.320)

In a letter to Baroness Vrevskaia, with whom he was infatuated when he was in his mid-fifties, we find again the lament for the lost youth when in his view it is still possible to change one's course in life. "I keep thinking, that if we had met when we were young, inexperienced and above all free - end the sentence for yourself."<sup>25</sup> In another letter to the same woman he writes: "Ah, if we only had the courage... a few years ago!"<sup>26</sup> To his friend Polonsky he wrote:

За несколько недель молодости - самой глупой, изломанной, исковерканной, но молодости - отдал бы я не только мою репутацию, но славу действительного гения, если бы я был им.  
(Письма, т.10, с.75)

Youth, for Turgenev

meant not only freshness and vitality, it also meant hope, the willingness to sacrifice, enthusiasm and love..... All his heroines are young, although it is the youngest of all - Natalya, Liza, Yelena, Marianna - who have the greatest emotional spontaneity. In Turgenev's hands, youth and love have a special

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<sup>25</sup>Yarmolinsky, Turgenev: The Man, His Art and His Age, p.372.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., p.374.



beauty because it is their very impermanence which makes them valuable, to be perpetually sought for and perpetually regretted.<sup>27</sup>

Apart from his views on happiness Turgenev expresses a very particular view of love. As in everything else, there is a duality in his view of this feeling. For his young heroines love means self-sacrifice, willingness to defy convention and follow her beloved, readiness to share his dreams and aspirations, and total abandon to feeling and passion. That is one aspect of love portrayed by Turgenev. The other view of love that manifests itself quite often which is expressed and experienced by the hero is that love is a disease, a calamity which befalls a man, a disaster against which one is powerless. The power of love is such that it reduces man to a state of helplessness. Love, at its most powerful state is "understood as an unhappiness, a natural calamity, which draws a man into a whirlpool, deprives him of his will and turns him into a toy of elemental, natural forces."<sup>28</sup> The idea that "...love arises inexplicably, spontaneously; before its power a man is defenseless and it often leads to suffering and death..." appears to bring an element of fate into Turgenev's world.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup>Freeborn, Turgenev: The Novelist's Novelist, p.190.

<sup>28</sup>I. Vinnikova, I.S. Turgenev v shestidesiatye gody: Ocherki i nabliudeniia (Saratov: Izd-vo Saratovskogo Universiteta 1965), p.109. Translation here is mine.

<sup>29</sup>S.M. Petrov, I.S. Turgenev: Tvorcheskii put' (Moscow: Gos. izdat. khudozhestvennoi literatury, 1961), p.220. Translation here is mine.





Here are a few references to fate:

Мне жаль ее...быть может, если б рок  
ее повел другой – другой дорогой...  
Но рок, так всеми принято, жесток;  
А потому и поступает строго.  
(Параша, т.І, с.100)

Наши жизни могли бы слиться – и  
не сольются никогда. (Рудин, т.6, с.337)

Я сам виноват; но согласитесь, что  
судьба как бы норочно подсмеялась  
над нами. (Рудин, т.6, с.338)

Видно, нам не суждено было жить вместе,  
и то счастье, о котором я мечтал, не для  
меня! (Рудин, т.6, с.323)

Счастье ко мне не шло; даже когда  
у меня были надежды на счастье,  
серце у меня все щемило.  
(Лиза, т.7, с.285)

Нас судьба соединила не даром; кто  
знает, может быть, я его убила;  
теперь его очередь увлечь меня за  
собой. Я искала счастья – и найду,  
быть может, смерть. Видно, так следовало;  
видно, была вина... (Елена, т.8, с.165)

Кто скажет, какой таинственной целью  
связана судьба человека с судьбой его  
детей, его потомства, и как отражаются  
на них его стремления, как высказываются  
с них его ошибки? Мы все должны смириться  
и преклонить головы перед Неведомым.  
(П.А.Б., т.7, с.49)

Экая, как подумаешь, моя судьба-то! В  
первой молодости я непременно хотел  
завоевать себе небо...потом я пустился  
мечать о благе всего человечества, о  
благе родины; потом и то прошло: я  
думал только, как бы устроить себе





домашнюю, семейную жизнь...да споткнулся  
о муравейник – и бух оземь, да в могилу...  
(А.П.С., т.6, с.190)

And here is what Turgenev has to say about love and  
its hold on a man:

Любовь, любовь Ирины – вот что стало теперь  
его правдой, его законом, его совестью...  
(Литвинов, т.9, с.265)

Любовь все-таки эгоизм; а в мои годы эгоистом  
быть непозволительно: нельзя в тридцать сем лет  
жить для себя; должно жить с пользой, с целью  
на земле, исполнять свой долг, свое дело. И я  
принялся было за работу... Вот опять все развеяно,  
как вихрем! Теперь я понимаю, о чем я писал тебе  
в первом моем письме; Я понимаю, какого испытан-  
ия мне не доставало. Как внезапно обрушился этот  
удар на мою голову! Стою и бессмысленно гляжу  
вперед: черная завеса висит перед самими глазами;  
на душе тяжело и страшно! Я могу себя сдерживать,  
я наружно спокоен не только при других, даже на  
едине; не бесноваться же мне в самом деле, как  
мальчику! (П.А.Б., т.7, с.39)

Любовь даже вовсе не чувство; она – болезнь,  
известное состояние души и тела; она не развива-  
ется постепенно; в ней нельзя сомневаться, с  
ней нельзя хитрить, хотя она и проявляется не  
всегда одинаково; обыкновенно она овладевает  
человеком без спроса, внезапно, против его  
воли – ни дать ни взять холера или лихорадка...  
Подцепит его, голубчика, как коршун цыпленка,  
и понесет его куда угодно, как он там ни  
бейся и ни упирайся...  
(А.П.С., т.6, с.190)

В любви нет равенства, нет так называемого  
свободного соединения душ и прочих идеальностей,  
придуманных на досуге немецкими профессорами...  
Нет, в любви одно лицо – раб, а другое – властелин,  
и недаром толкуют поэты о цепях, налагаемых  
любовью. Да, любовь – цепь, и самая тяжелая.  
По крайней мере я дошел до этого убеждения,  
и дошел до него путем опыта, купил это  
убеждение ценою жизни, потому что умираю рабом.  
(А.П.С., т.6, с.190)



Странная перемена произошла в нем со вчерашнего дня – во всей его наружности, в движениях, в выражении лица; да и он сам чувствовал себя другим человеком. Самоуверенность исчезла, и спокойствие исчезло тоже, и уважение к себе; от прежнего душевного строя не осталось ничего. Недавние, неизгладимые впечатления заслонили собою все остальное. Появилось какое-то небывалое ощущение, сильное, сладкое – и недоброе... (Литвинов, т.9, с.262)

The protagonist of the short story "Faust" concludes that

...жизнь не шутка и не забава, жизнь даже не наслаждение...жизнь – тяжелый труд. Отречение, отречение постоянное – вот ее тайный смысл, ее разгадка: не исполнение любимых мыслей и мечтаний, как бы они возвышенны ни были, – исполнение долга, вот о чем следует заботиться человеку; не наложив на себя цепей, железных цепей долга, не может он дойти, не падая, до конца своего поприща... (П.А.Б., т.7, с.50)

Gershenzon expressed the duality in Turgenev in the following manner:

There are two poles in Turgenev's teaching: one is to be all nature just like those cranes who follow their instinct in their autumn flight: *Wage zu treumen*. The other pole is to be all man, i.e. the human form of nature: *Entbehren sollst du*. In the first case the goal is set by a supernatural force, in the second by the mind and the will of the person itself: this, however, does not matter, as long as you fly to your goal irresistibly.<sup>30</sup>

Gershenzon goes on to say, that

the positive image brought forth by Turgenev, is determined by his integrity, self-oblivion and

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<sup>30</sup>М.О. Gershenzon, *Mechta i mysl' I.S. Turgeneva* (Moscow: Knigoizdat.pisatelei v Moskve, 1919), p.112. Translation here is mine.



unbending will. A modern man, he thought, acquires such a normal state only by serving some unselfish principal - an ideal.<sup>31</sup>

Turgenev felt that serving an ideal and at the same time achieving personal happiness was impossible. He was criticized for that and here is what one of his contemporaries, the young critic Dobroliubov had to say about the irreconcilability of the two concepts. He was referring to the above quotation from "Faust."

Не так давно один из наших даровитейших писателей высказал прямо этот взгляд, сказавши, что цель жизни не есть наслаждение, а, напротив, есть вечный труд, вечная жертва, что мы должны постоянно принуждать себя, противодействуя своим желаниям вследствие требований нравственного долга. В этом взгляде есть сторона очень похвальная, именно - уважение к требованиям нравственного долга. Но, с другой стороны, взгляд этот очень печален, потому что потребности человеческой природы он прямо признает противными требованиям долга... Кажется, не того можно назвать человеком истинно-нравственным, кто только терпит над собою веления долга как какое-то тяжелое иго, как "нравственные вериги", а именно того, кто заботится слить требования долга с потребностями внутреннего существа своего, кто старается переработать их в свою плоть и кровь внутренним процессом самосознания и саморазвития так, что бы они не только сделались инстинктивно-необходимыми, но и доставляли внутреннее наслаждение...<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup>Gershenzon, *Mechta i mysl'* I.S. Turgeneva, p.112. Translation here is mine.

<sup>32</sup>Petrov, *I.S. Turgenev: Tvorcheskii put'*, p.251.





As it is known, Turgenev saw the world divided into Hamlets and Don Quixotes. The Hamlets who are the dreamers, the seekers, the passive sufferers, and Don Quixotes who are men of action.

In his lecture, "Hamlet and Don Quixote", he gave preference to the Knight of La Mancha, since the Spaniard's illusions overcame his fear of death; his love of action liberated him from the burden of reflection, which dissects and kills the spontaneity of existence. As a friend and disciple of philosophers, Turgenev, of course, was much closer to the Prince of Denmark than to the ecstatic Spanish hidalgo. In picturing superfluous men he was in part making self-portraits, particularly when he showed how the self-analysis and self-criticism of heroes destroyed their ability for action. But he admired the Don Quixotes, and he also loved men like Bazarov, Solomin, and Insarov, who were the very antithesis of himself.<sup>33</sup>

The tragedy of many of his heroes is that they are Hamlets trying to be Don Quixotes without being able to reconcile themselves with the fact that they are Hamlets (Nezhdanov, for instance.) It is the heroines who have the make up of the Don Quixotes. They have the enthusiasm, the zeal, the passion and the courage which distinguish the Don Quixotes from the Hamlets. It is for this freshness that Turgenev loves his heroine. All his sympathies are on her side and the masterful description of the birth of love and an attempt at realization of her potentialities is unsurpassed in Russian literature. For all their enthusiasm,

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<sup>33</sup> Marc Slonim, The Epic of Russian Literature: From its Origins through Tolstoy (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), p.267.





however, their goals, and realization of their dreams are always bound up with a man. A contemporary critic points out in discussing the Turgenevan woman, and he gives Elena Stakhova (On the Eve) as an example, that, were it not for Insarov, she would have remained in the same environment of "poshlyi mir", which she detested, for all her desire of "deiatel'noe dobro".<sup>34</sup> Turgenev's attempt at describing the men of action was not a success. The characters (Insarov, Solomin) appear wooden, dry and uninteresting. The Hamlet-like heroes, on the other hand, are artistically beautifully treated and as characters as well as human beings they were obviously totally understood by the author who created them. Turgenev shared so many traits with them, he suffered with them, he was very unhappy for them, and believed with them that their love and happiness were not fated to be, just as his own was never to be. With his usual clarity and honesty, however, he confessed in a letter to Countess Lambert, "...men who are infirm of purpose like to invent 'fate' for themselves; that saves them from the necessity of having a will of their own, and frees them of all responsibility toward themselves."<sup>35</sup>

The Turgenevan heroine possessed everything that he cherished: youth, with all its aspects - dedication, love,

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<sup>34</sup>V.A. Zelinskii, Sobranie kriticheskikh materialov (Moscow: Tip. T. Malinskago, 1884), pp.260-261.

<sup>35</sup>Yarmolinsky, Turgenev: The Man, His Art and His Age, p.143.



courage and enthusiasm. She held out a promise of happiness, which the hero was either too late to grasp ("Asya"), was unable to live up to (Rudin), or had to forego on account of circumstances (A Nest of Gentlefolk). Because of Turgenev's emotional make up, because of the role that two dominant women in his life - his mother and Mme Viardot - played, his view of women was to a large extent predetermined. And thus it was because he did not experience a deep requited love of a woman, because he did not experience the kind of love that his heroines offer his heroes that he created his own unique type of heroine, endowed with such predictable characteristics - in Paul Valéry's words, to compensate "as best as he can for any injustice of fate."<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>36</sup>Maurois, Seven Faces of Love, p.104.



## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

Henry James tells us that Turgenev had great regard for Flaubert's creation of Homais, "the little Norman country apothecary, with his pedantry of 'enlightened opinions' in Madame Bovary..."<sup>1</sup> Turgenev felt that "the great strength of such a portrait consisted in its being at once an individual, of the most concrete sort, and a type."<sup>2</sup> According to James this was "the great strength of his own [Turgenev's] representations of character" since "they are so strangely, fascinatingly particular, and yet are so recognizably general."<sup>3</sup> Turgenev succeeded in creating male types. The heroes of his works are types belonging to the different periods in the development of the Russian intelligentsia whose evolution Turgenev set out to depict. Turgenev's heroines, on the other hand, were a projection of his ideal woman and therefore not types. The goal of classical realism was to create typical characters in literature. Turgenev, an outstanding exponent of classical realism, created several male personages that

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<sup>1</sup>Henry James, Partial Portraits (London: Macmillan and Co., Limited, 1905), p.317.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p.317.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp.317-318.





became types in Russian literature - Rudin and Bazarov are admirable examples. The goal of this thesis was to show that despite the individuality of each Turgenevan heroine, she did not constitute a type. The reasons for Turgenev's failure to create a female type were examined and analyzed. It was found that in the creation of his heroines, Turgenev's personal views on love, happiness and man's fate in the merciless universe played a decisive role in his inability to create a female type. His attitude toward women in his life prevented him from creating a Russian heroine on the basis of objective criteria. His heroines are projections of his personal needs and hopes and therefore, not typical representatives of the Russian women of the time. Since they are not types, their chief role in Turgenev's work, as this thesis tried to demonstrate, is their function in relation to the heroes; they are the yardsticks against which the heroes' moral worth is judged.

Using the method of functional analysis the heroines' personality traits, background, education and milieu were examined and compared. Some of the following constants were evident: the heroines were found to be young, to come from the same milieu (i.e. that of the gentry), to be similarly reared, to be equally sheltered from the realities of life with which the heroes were acquainted and by which they were often crushed. In all of Turgenev's stories the heroines fall in love and "their wings grow" and they are ready to abandon themselves to the heroes and their promise of great



deeds, but fate intervenes and prevents them from achieving happiness. The present study traced this development of the heroine.

James gives us an insight as to how Turgenev created his characters. In order to understand them more clearly, Turgenev wrote out a biography of each one of them "and everything they had done and that had happened to them up to the opening of the story."<sup>4</sup> This study examined the similarities in the biographies of the heroines and their actions in the course of each work, which determine their function vis à vis the heroes. The function that the heroine performs in the scope of Turgenev's novel is constant. She tests the man's moral worth by presenting him with a sincere and youthful challenge - to live up to the image that he presented to her. The hero's ideas contradict and oppose those of the society in which the heroine was raised and from which she is instinctively trying to free herself. The hero, therefore, finds more than a sympathetic listener in her. But Turgenev's heroes are incapable of meeting the woman's challenge and critics have offered several explanations of this fact. N. Chernyshevskii claimed that one should not blame elemental forces or fate for the hero's ineffectiveness but rather his own lack of

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<sup>4</sup>James, Partial Portraits, p.317.



character generated by the social conditions of life.<sup>5</sup>

Pisarev wrote that Russian men of the period lacked vitality and strength. Women, he felt, were unable to appraise men and therefore could not know that the object of their admiration never did and never would possess an independent, thoroughly developed personality. He commented that the heroes meet the heroines when their enthusiasm for the life struggle is already on the decline and is only temporarily rekindled by the admiration, enthusiasm and zeal of the youthful heroine.<sup>6</sup>

The aspirations and the dreams of the heroines and their thirst for happiness and fulfillment were not alien to Turgenev. All his life he himself was to oscillate between hope and despair at attaining happiness and often in the course of his life he would claim that he "makhnul na vse rukoi", that he did not expect happiness and that all he wished for was inner peace which is so necessary to an artist. Yet he never relinquished the habit of falling in love. "When Flaubert and Goncourt maintained that love had no bearing on a writer's work," Turgenev protested; "Nothing, he confessed, could take the place of women for him."<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>G. Bialyi, Turgenev i russkii realizm (Moscow: Sovetskii pisatel', 1962), p.100.

<sup>6</sup>D.I. Pisarev, Sochineniia (Moscow: Gos. izdat. khudozhestvennoi literatury, 1955), v. 1, p.239.

<sup>7</sup>Avrahm Yarmolinsky, Turgenev: The Man, His Art and His Age, (New York: Orion Press, 1959), p.328.





He claimed that "Love alone could produce that exquisite unfolding of the whole being which so stimulates the artist."<sup>8</sup> But one should not forget that there was a great duality in Turgenev which affected the painting of his heroines as well as his heroes. Turgenev yearned for happiness, only to think it impossible, he loved life, only to find it a burden, a task to be fulfilled. Nowhere is this duality as marked as in his view on love. He could never resist painting the beauty and tenderness of the first budding love when all nature seems to be in harmony with the two beings whose happiness is almost a reality. Yarmolinsky writes that Turgenev presents amorousness "...either in its shy beginnings or at its moment of climax; of love as a durable relation, as an everyday give-and-take, he has no more to say in any... of his novels."<sup>9</sup> Turgenev proclaimed in one of his poems in prose that love is stronger than death and repeated time and again that love is a disease, a terrible disaster that befalls a man.

Turgenev's young heroines represent the hope and the beauty of a young soul and the famous Russian critic Ovsianiko-Kulikovskii claims that the best in Turgenev's feminine characters were only hints on the author's part

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<sup>8</sup>Yarmolinsky, Turgenev: The Man, His Art and His Age, p.328.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p.253.





"at the possibility of such feminine strongly marked personality..."<sup>10</sup>

Turgenev became a victim of what G. Vinnikova calls a "fateful love" for the famous French singer Pauline Viardot and "one imagines that this incomplete, ambiguous liaison offered him the satisfaction of self-pity and allowed him to nurse a sense of frustration and unfulfillment."<sup>11</sup> It undoubtedly to "...some degree... nourished his work."<sup>12</sup> Turgenev compensated for the void and the lack of love that he felt by creating the heroines who "on the ground of moral beauty, of the finest distinction of soul," form "one of the most striking groups the modern novel has given us."<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>D.N. Ovsianiko-Kulikovskii, "Turgenev," Sobranie sochinenii S. .Peterburg: Izd-vo Obshchestvennaia kniga i knigoizdat. Prometei, 1910), v. 2, p.119.

<sup>11</sup>Yarmolinsky, Turgenev: The Man, His Art and His Age, p.234.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p.234.

<sup>13</sup>Donald Davie, Russian Literature and Modern English Fiction: A Collection of Critical Essays (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1965), p.53.



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